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INI – SDG

Impetuous Hands

Considering the theme of today's sermon. Many might be wondering if we are going to spend the whole evening speaking about preschool kids. Little kids do have a tendency to be impetuous. Some of them at least like to jump in and start doing things without even thinking about it.

I think of the story of the teacher who gave their kids a test and told them to read the test all the way through before starting. Some of the students immediately started answering questions, while some of them listened to the teacher and read the test all the way through to find at the end the statement: "Don't answer any questions on this test, fill out your name and hand it in."

But of course, it isn't just little kids and school students are impetuous. Many others have a tendency to jump in with good intentions without stopping to think or to ask about what they are doing.

Today we have the story of someone who was very impetuous. One person who was also jumping into action without thinking. And no, it's not a preschooler or a kindergartner, or even a teenager. It is the apostle Peter.

John 18:4-11 ⁴ Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶ Now when He said to them, "I am *He*," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek *Me*, let these go their way," ⁹ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave *Me* I have lost none." ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given *Me*?"

Of course, it's Peter.

All four gospels record that fact that a disciple cut off this man's ear. However only John tells us it was Peter. Possibly John's gospel was written after the death of Peter. But regardless even without John's gospel I think we could all have guessed that this was Peter. Of course, it was Peter

Peter the impetuous. Peter the disciples about whom we know more than any other apostle because he keeps sticking his foot in it so to speak. Peter who loves to jump in without looking. Peter was zealous. Peter was a man of action. He was well meaning, good intentioned, quick to act, but so often wrong.

Once again Peter jumps into action, why? What was he thinking? I'm going to save you Lord? I'm going to be the hero? Perhaps he was thinking of his vow which he made just a few hours previously. "Even if all others forsake you I will not." Perhaps he was thinking of that vow and wanted to prove Jesus wrong. Perhaps he wasn't thinking at all.

The problem is that Jesus did not want someone to stand up and fight for him, he wanted disciples ready to stand quietly and let him do what he came to do.

Peter was zealous, but for all his good intentions he was wrong.

The confirmation kids had a question on their worksheet this week.

Evaluate: "God would never punish us if we try to do what is right." As long as our heart is the right place than we are ok right? Wrong

The bible says that man will be held responsible for every idle word.

Matthew 12:36 ³⁶ "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

If we will have to give answer for every idle word, how much more will we have to give answer for every idle action. The policeman who accidentally shoots an innocent man. The man who is driving too fast because he just must get to an appointment and ends up in an accident. The teenager who says or does the wrong thing and really hurts his friend in word of deed. And of course Peter who pull out a sword because he thinks he is going to defend Jesus. We will be held responsible for every idle action.

Jesus tells Peter, put away the sword.

Peter should have already known better. This is not the first time that Peter thinks he has to defend Christ from death. Before this when Jesus was explaining that he had to go to Jerusalem to die. Peter tried to jump between Christ and the cross then as well. "Far be it from you Lord." Jesus rebuked Peter on that occasion as well. "Get behind me Satan." He told him. But obviously Peter did not get it yet. He still thought it was his job to get between Jesus and the cross. I will protect you from death with my sword.

Peter is impetuous he acts without understanding to do what he thinks is the right thing. He does what he thinks is the godly thing but without understanding.

If Peter had spent the time in prayer that Jesus had suggested, he probably would have been in a much better position to act wisely and in line with God's will. We talked about prayer a couple weeks ago. This is another reason that prayer is such an important part of our Christian life. We need that communication with God. To direct and guide us because we are so often ignorant of God's plan.

But Jesus acts to fix Peter's impetuous hands. Jesus' hands heal what Peter has broken. John is the only one who tells us that it was Peter, but Luke is the only one that records that Jesus healed the broken ear. That is what Jesus does. That is what he came to do. To fix to heal, to bind up what we in our good intentioned, well meaning, sometimes zealous, impetuosity, have messed up.

We would have to answer for every idle word, we would have to answer for every foolish act except Jesus answered for us. We act without thought and without understanding causing sin and pain even to those we love the most. But Jesus fixes our sin as he came to heal all sin. He heals Malchus' ear, as he heals all.

Peter's impetuous hands are a problem, but there is deeper problem with Peter and with us as well. Peter acts impetuously because at some level he does not trust Christ. He did not think that Christ had control of the situation. He seems to think that he has to save Christ instead of understanding that Christ came to save him.

Lack of trust often leads to well meaning but wrong action. We can probably all think of a time when some well meaning individual messed up something we were working on because they didn't trust, because they jumped and tried to "fix" what they thought we were doing wrong.

Jesus knows what he is doing, but Peter doesn't trust Jesus or doesn't think it through. He jumps in ready to act, I am going to save you Jesus and he just messes it all up.

Peter forgot what the Psalmist says, "be still and know that I am God." Jesus calls us to stand back and watch as he brings forth our salvation.

Jesus is in control. He proves it three times in our text. When he says, "I am he" and everyone falls down. When he says, "If you seek me let these all go." And finally when he heals Malchus' ear. In all three instances he proves that his is the power and the authority. He is in control.

Jesus is in control. It looks like Satan is winning. But Jesus has Satan right where he wants him. Satan is leading Jesus to his death but that is where Jesus wants to go.

There are many times in our lives when we might lost confidence in Jesus' power and control. We think that we need to step in because obviously Jesus is not handling the situation. One example is when someone is speaking ill of us and we decide we have to do something. We have to stop them. We take matters into our own hands instead of letting God take care of it.

Be still and know that I am God. With these words Jesus reminds us that he is control now just as much as he was in control in that garden. He has a plan. We do not need to jump and fix things ourselves. We do not need to march to war with a sword and shield.

What we need to do is “be still,” and watch and see how God works his plan in our lives. How God brings about our salvation. How even as Jesus is being led away to the cross, he is accomplishing the Father’s will and he is winning.

We do not need swords and we do not need zeal. What we need is Jesus who is our savior from sin.

Amen